Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and twelfth plenary meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 7 March 2017, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Alexey Borodavkin.....(Russian Federation)

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The President (*spoke in Russian*): I call to order the 1412th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, I would like to thank you all, distinguished colleagues, for your participation in the high-level segment last week. This important event was a success, and I would like to thank the secretariat for its efficient and excellent organization of the statements by ministers and deputy ministers for foreign affairs at the Conference. Allow me to point out that we were privileged to have 20 distinguished guests during the four plenary sessions, which is more than last year.

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, before turning to today's list of speakers, I would like to tell you about my consultations on a programme of work for the 2017 session of the Conference on Disarmament and my plans for the near future.

As you will recall, from the very outset I promised to work as President of the Conference on Disarmament in the most open and transparent manner possible, focusing on drafting a proposal for a programme of work for the Conference on which we could reach consensus.

In addition to the informal consultations on a programme of work held on 21 February, which many of you attended, I held a number of bilateral discussions. I will continue this consultation process, in particular with the Group of Western States and other representatives. I would like to draw your attention to the constructive meeting that was held with the Group of 21. A very substantive discussion took place, during which all of your colleagues, without exception, said that they were in favour of revitalizing the Conference, lifting it out of stagnation and adopting a balanced programme of work.

Mr. Htin Lynn, the Ambassador of Myanmar, who, as you know, chairs the working group on the way ahead, came to the same conclusion in the light of his consultations. In particular, he confirmed that during the consultations delegations actively expressed their support for the speedy adoption of a programme of work. However, no doubt the Ambassador himself will give you his own views on the subject.

Many also spoke in favour of starting work immediately on the text of a draft programme of work. We have prepared such a text. It is based on last year's proposal and has been updated for the 2017 session. The main change compared to document CD/2070 is that the working group on nuclear disarmament is mentioned first, and the working group on the convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism second. Their mandates are described in terms that seem likely to gather consensus.

I wish to draw your attention to the fact that we are proposing a system of joint chairing for the working groups, under which they would be chaired by the sitting President of the Conference and co-chaired by a representative of a regional group.

I would also like to mention one other matter. The Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Matthew Rowland, is ready to take up the Chair of the working group on nuclear disarmament. However, as yet there is no candidate for the working group on the international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism. In our opinion, a logical and balanced solution would be for it to be co-chaired by a representative of the Group of 21. We invite colleagues from this Group to decide on the candidate to be put forward for this position.

Another important point: we removed the words to the effect that the mandate of the working group on nuclear disarmament would be for the duration of 2017, since this is evident. In accordance with the rules of procedure, the programme of work is adopted by the Conference for the current session only.

The draft programme of work was circulated by the secretariat to delegations by email yesterday. I hope that many of you have already had a chance to look at it. On Friday, 10 March, at 10 a.m., I intend to convene informal consultations in this room to discuss the document. I think that, if necessary, it will be possible to meet once more in an informal setting. The Russian presidency is ready to lead such consultations.

I am counting on all partners to support this draft text. If we can build consensus around it, then we will propose its adoption next week. I wish to emphasize that we have

tried to take account of everything that was said during the consultations. In our view, this is a consensus text, but if colleagues have any pertinent comments and suggestions to make, the presidency will, of course, be prepared to consider them.

I would also like to highlight the most important aspect. If the Conference manages to adopt the proposed programme of work, it will not only revitalize the work of the Conference, but will also prepare the way for considering all the key issues of the Conference in an equitable and inclusive manner.

And, finally, to my last point. As you can see, the presidency is working seriously and steadfastly to ensure that a programme of work is adopted. However, time is running out, as they say, we have little more than a week and a half left. I therefore invite you to seek instructions from your capitals on the draft programme of work that has been proposed without further delay. It is important that you receive these instructions, if possible, by 10 March, when the informal consultations will take place.

Thank you for your attention. I am ready to answer your questions.

The representative of the United States of America has the floor.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, let me, first, thank you for circulating this text. It was unfortunate that I received it in my email last night at about 6.30, so I really have not had a chance myself to take a look at the text so far this morning.

I am also taken aback. I was not expecting that you were planning to put a text down at this point and with the intent to take action next week. As I have said on numerous occasions, my Government is taking a very serious look at the text, but we are not yet in a position to say whether we can support it or not.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the United States for his comments, but wish to point out that, at this stage, we are not expecting our colleagues to give their definitive and clear views on the text, which was circulated only yesterday.

I have asked all of you, distinguished colleagues, to seek instructions from your capitals on the proposed draft and, if possible, to obtain those instructions by 10 March, when informal consultations will take place. By next week I hope that all of you will have received your instructions, because we would really like to start discussing this draft seriously and, if a consensus emerges, and I hope it will, to propose the adoption of the text during a formal meeting at the end of next week.

Once again, I express the hope that your authorities will take the draft seriously, give it consideration and issue you with appropriate instructions.

Would anyone else like to take the floor? The representative of Pakistan has the floor.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): Mr. President, as this my first time taking the floor under your presidency, I wish to congratulate you on assuming this important responsibility. We appreciate the manner in which you are conducting your work and I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our deepest condolences on the passing away of a great leader and very important ambassador of the Russian Federation — a much respected ambassador of the Russian Federation — Ambassador Vitaly Churkin in New York. We have seen how he worked and have greatly admired his ability to work in different situations and we will all miss him.

Mr. President, we commend your initiative to hold an informal thematic plenary of the Conference on Disarmament dedicated to the 110th anniversary of the second Hague Conference of Peace that, in many aspects, laid the foundation for contemporary international humanitarian law and arms control.

We also appreciate the good start taken by the working group on the way ahead, being ably chaired by the Ambassador of Myanmar. Credit goes to the previous Conference President, the Romanian Ambassador, for bringing everyone on board on this promising

initiative. We were glad to support this initiative and we look forward to working in this context.

Mr. President, we welcome your broad outreach to regional groups as well as your bilateral consultations in order to seek the views of member States on the initiative that we have before us today. We received it yesterday through the Group of 21 coordinator; your proposal is for a draft programme of work. We note that it is quite similar to the draft proposal circulated by your delegation as document CD/2070 last year, as you yourself have pointed out. I would also like to thank you for the elaborations you made with regard to your views on how the presidencies or the chairs in the context of this programme of work will be taken.

While we have sent the draft proposal to Islamabad for instructions, our initial reaction to it is very positive. We find the proposal promising and practical for the commencement of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament. We hope to receive a formal response from the capital soon. I assure you that my delegation will engage with you constructively in this regard.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for her expression of support for the presidency, her words of sympathy concerning the death of Ambassador Churkin and her support for the draft programme of work.

If no one else wishes to respond to my statement, I would like to move on to the list of speakers.

I see that the representative of France wishes to take the floor in response to my statement.

Ms. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, please allow me to warmly congratulate you on assuming this important office. I would also like to thank you for your efforts to reach consensus on a programme of work and thereby revive the vital work of this legitimate body, the Conference on Disarmament. We will seek to take an open and flexible approach to any draft programme of work that might be able to gather a consensus. However, since the one currently before us was circulated so recently, you will understand that my delegation has been unable to obtain precise instructions from Paris and reserves the right to provide more specific feedback at a later date. Nevertheless, please allow me to reiterate our attachment to what in our view is an essential point: any development, preliminary work, thought or discussion regarding a draft convention on the suppression of chemical and biological terrorism, which is indeed a serious and real threat, should be approached with an eye, at all times, on preserving the authority and credibility of the two existing instruments: the Chemical Weapons Convention — including the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which supports the Convention's implementation — and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

Once again, you may count on our constructive approach to any draft programme of work that could command consensus, but we would like to consider the current draft in more detail and reserve the right to revisit it at a later time.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of France for her statement. I would like to point out that, in fact, today we were not intending to elicit any specific reaction to the proposed programme of work, we merely announced it. The answers to the questions raised in your statement, as you know, can be found in the information documents that we circulated earlier on drafting an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism at the Conference on Disarmament. Of course we can also discuss all of these questions during the informal consultations.

I recognize the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Mr. President, let me join others in thanking you for your efforts to get the Conference on Disarmament back to work. They are very much appreciated.

Like others, we saw this draft for the first time yesterday evening. We will examine it carefully and send it back to London. I am pleased to see that the essence of the United

Kingdom proposal from last year has been preserved. I would note that the mandate for that working group is quite specific, and I would have some confidence were we to proceed with that working group in having a fairly clear direction for the group's activities. I think a concern for London will be that the mandate for the second working group is less specific and less clear; and, subject to their views of course, I think they may want to see more framing for that working activity. I think it would be in the interest of that working group to have a more specific mandate if it is to have a greater chance of producing a useful result. However, those are just initial comments at this stage and we will, of course, engage with you with all the support that I promised when we last spoke.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom. I wish to emphasize, as I said already, that we will have the opportunity to discuss the draft programme of work of the Conference at a meeting which, I hope, will be held with the Western Group, as well as during bilateral discussions and informal consultations in the framework of the Conference. Moreover, I wish to emphasize that we are, of course, open to suggestions on the draft text, provided that they bring us even closer to reaching a consensus text, insofar as that is possible, and do not delay the start of negotiations on an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism.

The representative of Egypt has the floor.

Mr. Atta (Egypt): Mr. President, first of all I would like to echo what was said by previous speakers congratulating you on the assumption of your duties as President of the Conference on Disarmament. We thank you as well for the proposal submitted to us yesterday. We still believe that this step should have been taken at the beginning of the Conference session in 2017.

Mr. President, just to be clear when I convey this proposal to my capital, I have a question. Do I take it that this programme of work is for a negotiating mandate? This is not clear in operative paragraph 2 of the draft decision, and I would like just to be clear when I convey it to my capital.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Egypt for his congratulations on the assumption of my duties as President of the Conference. In answer to his question, we consider the wording used in operative paragraph 2 of the draft programme of work to be a pre-negotiating mandate and we hope that after this pre-negotiation stage we will be able to move directly on to the negotiation work.

If no one else wishes to speak on this matter, allow me to turn to the list of speakers that has been prepared in advance. I give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, we thank you for your proposal in the sense that the use of chemical and biological weapons by anyone anywhere is a matter of grave concern for us — and it should be for all of us. We will seek instructions on your proposal from Seoul.

Now, I would like to turn to yesterday's ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. They are yet another provocation only 22 days after the missile firing on 12 February, which was strongly condemned at this forum and by the international community as constituting a flagrant and clear violation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions as well as a great threat to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and the international community as a whole.

This is yet another clear demonstration of the impulsive, unpredictable, trigger-happy and brutal nature of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as pointed out by my Foreign Minister here last week. The Government of the Republic of Korea condemns the provocation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the strongest terms.

The launches were conducted in the midst of the international community's shock and anger to the inhumane murdering of Kim Jong-nam with the nerve agent VX, a chemical weapon prohibited under the Chemical Weapons Convention. This clearly demonstrates the reckless pursuit of prohibited weapons by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in defiance of the concerted warnings from the international community.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must realize that its repeated provocations and fanatic obsession with nuclear and ballistic missiles development will only accelerate its path to isolation and self-inflicted demise.

It is apparent that naming and shaming alone does not have an effect on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Korea urges all countries to faithfully implement sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including Security Council resolutions 2270 (2016) and 2321 (2016).

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Ms. O'Brien (Ireland): Mr. President, let me start by congratulating you on the assumption of the presidency. I assure you of the full cooperation and support of Ireland in your challenging task. I also wish to express my deep and sincere condolences for the untimely passing of Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, a memorable diplomat and a personal friend.

In the interest of time, I will deliver an abridged version of my statement. It has become a matter of fact to start our statements in this chamber by addressing the long-standing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, and my statement will unfortunately be no exception. We deeply regret the repeated failures to achieve consensus over a programme of work during the past two decades. Flexibility and genuine political will are indispensable for changing this lamentable and unsustainable state of affairs.

We welcome the recent establishment of a working group on the way ahead under the chairmanship of Ambassador Lynn of Myanmar as a positive step in our collective efforts to bring the Conference back to substantive work. We also, of course, welcome the draft decision on a programme of work which you have just introduced and which we will consider very carefully as you have requested us to do in the coming days.

Lastly, we stand ready to support any initiative aimed at furthering substantive consultations on membership expansion as well as any proposal which would amount to real and substantive review of the Conference's membership, which we see as long overdue.

Mr. President, the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons has been a driving force of the foreign policy of Ireland and of our engagement within the United Nations — and one to which our people and our Government remain wholeheartedly committed. The risks inherent in the existence of nuclear weapons are too high to lose more time by only lamenting the complex security situation. Complex problems require complex solutions, and yet sometimes the most apparently complex decision is also the simplest.

Ireland welcomes the adoption, by a large majority, of General Assembly resolution 71/258 on the establishment of a United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination, of which Ireland is proud to have been a lead sponsor. We look forward to the negotiations to be held in New York at the end of this month, and in June and July, and we encourage all delegations, including nuclear-weapon States and States possessing nuclear weapons, to participate in good faith. Nuclear disarmament is a common goal, a common interest and a common duty. Abstention from multilateral negotiations does not bring about an absolution from this responsibility.

A prohibition on nuclear weapons is a logical and moral imperative. It is also a legal imperative stemming from article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) itself. The objective is to fill a legal gap existing under international law and to contribute to the implementation of article VI as one of the effective measures provided for in that article.

It is important to understand that the adoption of a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons will not absolve States from their many other obligations and commitments under the NPT, which is the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

My delegation looks forward to the upcoming session of the NPT Preparatory Committee, where we will engage actively and constructively, both in our national capacity

and as coordinator of the New Agenda Coalition, towards meaningful outcomes on a range of issues, including enhanced transparency and accountability and accelerated implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments.

Further, Ireland would wish to see progress on the long-stalled process leading to a fissile material treaty. In this respect, we voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 71/259 providing for the establishment of a high-level expert preparatory group. Notwithstanding our reservations with regard to the limited membership of the new forum, the rule of consensus and the limited scope of the mandate, which excludes stockpiles, we stand ready to support any effort for movement on this front. We attended the informal consultative meeting on the issue in New York this week and will be following developments closely.

In addition to our work on nuclear disarmament, Ireland remains actively engaged in efforts to support the universalization and full implementation of all disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments, including the Arms Trade Treaty, the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.

Mr. President, I wish to take advantage of tomorrow's International Women's Day to address an issue of high importance to Ireland, that of gender and disarmament. We commend the initiatives of the Netherlands and of Pakistan to hold informal Conference plenaries dedicated to this issue in the past. Ireland firmly believes that due consideration ought to be given in disarmament and non-proliferation forums and negotiations to both the gendered impact of weapons as well as to women's empowerment and agency.

Let me just say a few words on each. Armed conflict and the use of weapons have differing impacts on women and on men. When it comes to nuclear weapons in particular, research findings are striking. Ample scientific evidence confirms the disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on women and girls. Ireland has, since the ground-breaking Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, actively engaged in creating awareness of this issue, including in the context of the First Committee of the General Assembly and of the NPT.

Moreover, women have been and continue to be a powerful force for change in relation to disarmament affairs. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) recognizes this and calls for women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security and for the incorporation of gender perspectives in all areas of peacebuilding. It is our firm belief that empowering women in the disarmament field will bring us closer to our goals, and we look forward to exploring how gender and disarmament can be integrated into our work in the Conference on Disarmament.

Ireland strongly values the contribution of civil society to disarmament debates, both in terms of advocacy and awareness-raising, as well as of research and academic work. My delegation strongly supports a more systematic and dynamic engagement of the Conference with civil society actors.

Finally, Mr. President, but most importantly, Ireland condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent launch of four ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the European Union in this regard. Once again, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from actions that violate the country's obligations under international law, and we reiterate our call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to re-engage in credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community, in particular within the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

Let me conclude by stating the obvious. The NPT does not perpetuate the right to nuclear weapons. It acknowledges the reality of their existence while the process of disarmament is taken forward. This year marks the beginning of the first multilateral nuclear weapons negotiations since the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty over 20

years ago, a treaty which has lamentably not yet entered into force and which we call on all remaining States to ratify without delay.

We cannot ignore the wider security situation, nor should we. There has been a worrying decrease in the taboo around the threat of use. There are persistent illegal nuclear tests; there is vast investment in so-called modernization, with increased lethal capacity, with talk of more strategic, more targeted, more usable nuclear weapons. But the very idea that any nuclear weapon could ever be used again — and in some sort of controlled way — is one of the most dangerous to have emerged in the current discourse. Knowing what we know now about their catastrophic consequences and the impossibility of any adequate humanitarian response, we must do everything to ensure that they are never used again.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of Ireland for her statement, her words of welcome extended to the Russian presidency and the condolences expressed in connection with the passing of Ambassador Churkin.

I give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, I am taking the floor today to introduce the International Cyberspace Cooperation Strategy, which was issued on 1 March of this year by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Cyberspace Administration of China. This is the first international strategy issued by China in the field of cyberspace, and it also serves as a policy guideline for the country's participation today and in the future in international governance and related cooperation in this field. The Chinese delegation has requested that the secretariat distribute this document in the Conference as an official document. I hope now, in a short presentation, to set out for everyone the thinking of the Chinese Government behind this strategy and to describe its main content.

In today's world, the information revolution is developing at pace and cyberspace is merging forever faster with real space, providing humankind with enormous opportunities for development. At the same time, this process has also brought with it numerous challenges and an urgent need for concerted efforts and a collective response from the international community. China steadfastly supports a cooperative, win-win philosophy. It is actively engaged in international cooperation on cyberspace with all countries and is working hand in hand with the international community to together build a shared future in this field.

In issuing the International Cyberspace Cooperation Strategy, China is pursuing the following objectives: to flesh out and give meaning to the idea of a shared future in cyberspace; to comprehensively set out the country's cyberspace policy; to spell out the country's purposes and objectives in participating in relevant international cooperation; to signal its strong support for international exchanges and cooperation in this field; and to propose a "Chinese solution" for tackling the difficult problems of global cyberspace governance.

The Strategy comprehensively analyses the opportunities and challenges of cyberspace. It sets out "peace, sovereignty, shared governance and shared benefits" as the fundamental principles of international cooperation in this field, firmly establishing defence of sovereignty and security; development of a system of international rules; promotion of fair Internet governance; protection of citizens' legitimate rights and interests; advocacy of cooperation on questions related to the digital economy; and establishment of the web as a platform for cultural exchange as six major strategic goals, and on these grounds establishes a plan of action consisting of nine specific pillars for international cyberspace cooperation. To sum up, the Strategy has five main points:

The first is "peace and development". World peace and development are inseparable from cyberspace security and stability. The Strategy calls for strict observance by the international community of the objectives and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, above all, the prohibition against the threat or use of force, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Strategy calls for ensuring peace and security in cyberspace and for preventing cyberspace from turning into a new battleground. China stands ready to

work with all countries, on the basis of mutual respect and through cooperation, to promote peace and work together to defend the peace and security of cyberspace.

The second is win-win cooperation. In cyberspace, everyone is so inextricably interdependent that there are simply no alternatives to discussion and cooperation. The Strategy places win-win cooperation at its core and maintains that all countries must seek development and security through cooperation and work, through cooperation, to bring about the realization of global cyberspace governance. China has played an active role in international cyberspace cooperation and has constantly worked to strengthen its bilateral, regional and international dialogues and cooperation in this field. It hopes that all countries will, with it, steadfastly support the concept of win-win cooperation and together bring about lasting peace and shared prosperity in cyberspace.

The third is sovereign equality. The principle of sovereign equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations is a fundamental basis for today's international relations and should apply to cyberspace. China believes that every country has the right to choose its own path for cyberspace development, its own model of cyberspace administration and its own public Internet policy and to take part in international cyberspace governance on an equal footing. All countries must develop international cooperation and together build a just and coherent international cyberspace order on the basis of mutual respect for national sovereignty.

The fourth is sharing of benefits. The Strategy calls for furthering open cooperation in the field of the Internet, favouring complementarity and common development in cyberspace and ensuring that everyone can reap the benefits of web development opportunities. In particular, assistance for developing countries must be stepped up to close the digital divide. China stands ready to continue intensifying cooperation with other countries on cybersecurity and information technologies and together to foster development and innovation of the global digital economy, ensuring sustainable development in cyberspace.

The fifth is jointly developed, shared governance. According to the Strategy, multilateral participation and participation by all interested parties must be supported to establish a multilateral, democratic and transparent global system of Internet governance and to ensure that web resources are open to all, that responsibility is shared and that cooperation is jointly administered. We hope all countries will together strive to achieve this goal as soon as possible.

China has always highly valued Internet development and has made great efforts to push forward and actively take part in international cyberspace cooperation. We hope that all States will work with us hand in hand to deepen dialogue and cooperation so that we may together build a peaceful, secure, open, cooperative and orderly cyberspace and establish a multilateral, democratic and transparent system of global Internet governance.

Mr. President, I would also like to take this opportunity to discuss briefly the position of the Government of China in respect of the current situation on the Korean Peninsula.

On the question of the Korean Peninsula, China has consistently and insistently called for the denuclearization of the peninsula; it has insistently called for the maintenance of peace and stability there and it has insistently called for the resolution of the issues on the peninsula through dialogue and consultation.

China notes the recent firing of missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The relevant Security Council resolutions contain explicit provisions regarding the use by that country of ballistic missile technology to fire missiles. China opposes such launches, which are conducted in violation of the Security Council resolutions.

At the same time, China is aware that the Republic of Korea and the United States of America are currently carrying out large-scale joint military exercises directed against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. China is of the view that such military exercises do nothing to help resolve the problems on the Korean Peninsula and may well exacerbate tensions, complicating the situation further.

China also resolutely opposes the deployment by the United States and the Republic of Korea of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) anti-missile system and will take the necessary steps to protect its own security interests. China strongly urges the parties concerned to take full account of its legitimate concerns and to halt such deployments.

The current situation on the Korean Peninsula is complex and sensitive. All parties must remain level-headed and exercise restraint. They must refrain from provoking one another and aggravating regional tensions so as to further the denuclearization process on the peninsula and give effect to joint efforts to secure peace and stability there.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ambassador Fu Cong for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Wood (Australia): Mr. President, let me first congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. I assure you of the cooperation of the Australian delegation.

I take the floor to add the voice of Australia to others and condemn the latest missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March, which are a clear breach of United Nations Security Council resolutions and a further threat to regional and global peace and stability. Australia calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease its provocative behaviour, abandon its nuclear and missile programmes and engage constructively with the international community. There is a pressing need to improve the welfare of the impoverished people of North Korea, rather than divert resources to develop nuclear weapons and missiles.

Australia will work with the international community in response to actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We support efforts to forge regional and multilateral solutions to enhance security across the Indo-Pacific and deal with this threat. We will work with the Republic of Korea, Japan, China, the United States and other friends and partners to increase the costs of these ongoing deplorable actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Australia for her congratulations on my assumption of the presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Davison (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me assure you of my delegation's support.

Canada strongly condemns the launch of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March in violation of multiple resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. Three of the missiles reportedly fell in the exclusive economic zone of Japan. These launches, which follow on other similar provocations, including two nuclear tests in 2016, confirm the scale of the threat the Democratic People's Republic of Korea poses to regional and international security and demonstrate the need for a concerted international response. Canada urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully respect its international obligations, put an end to its illegal and destabilizing actions and immediately and verifiably abandon its ballistic missile programme.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and words of greeting extended to the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Malta.

Ms. Kemppainen (Malta): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia align themselves with the European Union statement.

The European Union strongly condemns the launch of four ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March. These continuing launches represent an utter disregard of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2321 (2016), unanimously adopted on 30 November 2016.

The actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are illegal and a threat to regional and international security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must halt

all launches using ballistic missile technology and abandon its ballistic missile, nuclear and other weapons-of-mass-destruction programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner as required by the Security Council. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea needs to immediately re-engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community, in particular within the Six-Party Talks.

The High Representative of the European Union and Vice-President, Federica Mogherini, will be in contact with the partners of the European Union to further discuss the international response over the coming days.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Malta for reading out the statement on behalf of the European Union and a number of other States. I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Muylle (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to thank you, on behalf of my delegation, for your efforts to revive the work of the Conference on Disarmament, and to assure you of my country's full support in this regard.

My delegation has taken note of the draft decision you circulated yesterday and which consists of two parts: the first on the establishment of a working group on nuclear disarmament and the second on the establishment of a working group to develop the main components of an international convention on the suppression of chemical and biological terrorism. Belgium will examine the draft decision closely.

Regarding the recent launch of ballistic missiles by North Korea, my delegation endorses the statement by the European Union and, in the light of the seriousness of developments, would like to stress a few points from a national perspective. It is important to Belgium to add its voice to those of other countries in strongly and unequivocally condemning the launch of four ballistic missiles on Monday, 6 March. Three of the missiles fell into the Sea of Japan, inside that country's exclusive economic zone. Clearly, these launches threaten regional stability and jeopardize international peace and security. They show the determination of the North Korean regime to develop genuine nuclear-weapons capability by pursuing a parallel ballistics programme in support of its nuclear programme. This is a serious violation of various Security Council resolutions. Following on the recent nuclear tests, these launches once again confirm the need for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to enter into force swiftly. The international community must not be swayed by nuclear blackmail. Through the actions of the Security Council, the international community must stand firm and united not only in its response to this provocation but also in the full implementation of the sanctions, which are a crucial tool for encouraging Pyongyang to change its behaviour. Belgium once again requests North Korea to put an immediate end to its illegal nuclear-weapons programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, to comply with its international obligations and to adopt specific measures to restore trust and stability in the region.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of Belgium for his statement and the words of support for the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, once again I need to take the floor to respond to the recent missile test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Let me make very clear that the United States strongly condemns the missile launches that were carried out over the weekend by North Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has once again defied the will of the international community with its latest violations of United Nations Security Council resolutions. These repeated violations of international law must not go unchallenged. The weapons programmes of North Korea represent a clear threat to the national security of every country of the region. As its programmes continue to grow, the threat to the security of every country of the region and beyond increases.

Let me also be clear: the ironclad commitment of the United States to defend its allies remains as strong as ever. We again call on all States to use whatever influence they have with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to convince Pyongyang to back

down from its provocative, belligerent and dangerous behaviour and to come into compliance with its Security Council obligations. Until then, the isolation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will only deepen.

If I may, Mr. President, just respond to some comments that were made by the Ambassador of China with regard to the question of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system. As we have said many times before, the THAAD system is purely a defensive system designed to counter short- and medium-range regional ballistic missiles. The THAAD system in the Republic of Korea will be focused solely on North Korea and contribute to a layered missile defence that would enhance the alliance's existing missile defence capabilities against potential North Korean missile threats. It will not undermine the strategic deterrent of other countries.

These missile launches further demonstrate, in our view, the wisdom and necessity of the United States-Republic of Korea alliance to deploy the THAAD system as a purely defensive measure to protect the security of the Republic of Korea and its people from armed attack, and to protect alliance military forces from the weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile threats of North Korea.

My last point is to respond to the comments about the United States and Republic of Korea exercises. These joint military exercises, as we have said many times here, are transparent and defence-oriented and have been carried out regularly and openly under the Combined Forces Command for roughly 40 years. They are designed to increase our readiness to defend the Republic of Korea, protect the region and maintain stability on the Korean Peninsula. These exercises are a clear demonstration of the United States commitment to the alliance.

The exercises are carried out in accordance with the armistice. The United Nations Command informs the Democratic People's Republic of Korea People's Army about the exercise dates and the non-provocative nature of the training. We note that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea did not notify anyone about the launches we are now discussing.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the United States for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Takenizawa (Japan): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you, Ambassador Borodavkin, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I appreciate your hard work on preparing a programme of work and, with regard to the draft programme of work, we will report to Tokyo and we will duly consider it.

Mr. President, as many member States have mentioned, yesterday, 6 March, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea simultaneously launched ballistic missiles, and three of them landed in the exclusive economic zone of Japan. These actions are clear provocations to the security of the region and the international community and are totally unacceptable. In particular, the fact that the missiles came down inside the exclusive economic zone of Japan is a direct and grave threat to the security of Japan and is a serious danger for aviation and navigation.

These ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are clear violations of a series of United Nations Security Council resolutions and go against the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. We condemn the action by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the strongest terms and reiterate our strong demand for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately and fully implement relevant resolutions and other commitments.

Mr. President, before I conclude my statement, my delegation would like to echo those voices referring to International Women's Day, which is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women, as well as promoting an inclusive, gender-equal world.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Japan for his statement. The representative of Mexico now has the floor.

Ms. Ramírez Valenzuela (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that I have taken the floor during your presidency, allow me to express my delegation's support, Mr. President, as you undertake your functions.

Mexico joins other delegations in condemning the new launch of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Yesterday, my country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a press release which states the following:

> The Mexican Government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, condemns the launch of four rockets with ballistic missile technology by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The launch of these rockets constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and multiple binding resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. The Mexican Government reaffirms that such actions disrupt international peace and security and impede multilateral efforts to create an atmosphere of stability and cooperation in the Korean Peninsula and North-East Asia.
>
> Mexico reiterates that North Korea is obliged to comply with the Security Council resolutions adopted on this matter since 2006 which require North Korea to discontinue launches with ballistic missile technology and all other acts of provocation.
>
> The recent launch of missiles by North Korea is the second that has taken place this year, following the launch carried out by that country on 13 February, which was also condemned by the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
>
> Mexico will continue to closely monitor the Security Council's follow-up on this issue.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Mexico for her statement and for the words of greeting addressed to the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Lagos (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, my delegation has also asked for the floor to refer briefly to the recent launch of four ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Chile expresses its deep concern about these actions, which destabilize the Asian region, defy the international community and constitute a direct threat to the security of the Republic of Korea and Japan, two of our closest friends. Chile reiterates the call for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to regularize its position under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-possessor State, to place all of its facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency and to fulfil all of its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions. Finally, Chile joins the international community in urging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from carrying out aggressive actions that threaten peace. We call on this country and all parties to return to the path of dialogue in the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Chile for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van der Kwast (Netherlands): I thank you, Mr. President, and we also want to thank the former President, Romania; we want to thank as well Ambassador Lynn of Myanmar for the extensive consultations he has held; and we want to thank you for further working on this and putting a proposal on the table — we think that is helpful and we will look into it. We are ready to have further discussion on those proposals.

Now, in addition to the statement by the European Union, the Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to make the following statement in a national capacity.

We strongly condemn the missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March. These launches and the nuclear tests performed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea severely destabilize the region and should be ceased immediately. We call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to halt its ongoing provocations and re-engage in a meaningful dialogue with the international community. The international community has the obligation to fully implement the United Nations

Security Council sanctions regime, for it is only through persistent, joint efforts by all that these sanctions will be effective. We continue and we will work with and through the United Nations and the European Union to make sure that the international community takes united and effective action to deal with those violations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his statement and his support for the President's efforts to draft a programme of work for the Conference. I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Makarowski (Sweden): Mr. President, let me also congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of the full cooperation of our delegation; and thank you also for the draft programme of work, which is now under consideration — we are looking forward to further discussions on the draft.

On the issue of the launch of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to refer to the statement by the European Union, which Sweden fully supports, and add a few short remarks in a national capacity.

The launch of four ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March 2017 is a flagrant violation of several United Nations Security Council resolutions. The launch is very likely to further increase tensions in the region. As the Security Council has stated, the actions constitute a threat to international peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should immediately abandon all nuclear and ballistic missile-related activities and come into full compliance with its obligations under relevant resolutions of the Security Council. In order to lower tensions on the Korean Peninsula and in the region, the best way forward is dialogue and negotiations. We strongly encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take that path, instead of continued violations of international norms.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement and his expression of support for the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Ağacıkoğlu (Turkey): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, let me start by congratulating you.

Turkey condemns the latest ballistic missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which constitute yet another flagrant violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must fully comply with its international obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions and cease its ballistic missile launches and other activities threatening regional, as well as international, security and stability.

We once again call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease its confrontational behaviour, which benefits neither the Democratic People's Republic of Korea itself nor the international community and is detrimental to peace and security in the region.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement and his words of congratulations addressed to the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me first of all congratulate you on your assumption of responsibilities as President of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of my delegation's full support in your efforts to find common ground for a programme of work.

I would like also to take this opportunity to join other delegations in reiterating the strong condemnation by Italy of the launch of four ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March. Italy aligns itself with the statement previously delivered by the European Union. These repeated ballistic missile tests, as well as the development of a nuclear arsenal, constitute a threat to international peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has once again openly violated existing United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must relinquish the development of a missile and nuclear weapons arsenal and abandon the road taken towards self-isolation and challenging the international community.

Italy is ready to contribute to a firm and cohesive response of the international community. In our current capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), we will support efforts worldwide to properly enforce the set of restrictive measures adopted by the Security Council.

We urgently call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards as well as to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Italy for his statement and his congratulations to and expression of support for the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria.

Ms. Davidova (Bulgaria): Mr. President, first, I would like to thank you for presenting the draft decision on a programme of work and for your significant efforts to put the Conference on Disarmament back on track.

Second, Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and, in a national capacity, I would like to make some brief remarks.

We condemn the latest ballistic missile launches carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March 2017. This repeated provocation poses a direct threat to regional and international peace and security and is yet another direct violation of all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. We strongly call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to suspend its nuclear and ballistic missile programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, to join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as to resume dialogue with the international community in a credible and meaningful manner.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Bulgaria for supporting the efforts of the Russian presidency to draft a programme of work. I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Ms. Masana Garcia (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): While offering my congratulations to you, Mr. President, as this is the first time I have taken the floor, I wish to acknowledge the conscientious work being done by your delegation. I would also like to share with you the content of an official communication issued by the Peruvian Government:

> The Peruvian Government strongly condemns the launch of four medium-range missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea yesterday. This new ballistic missile launch poses a serious threat to regional peace and security in North-East Asia and around the world and is a further violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions by the North Korean Government.
>
> Peru, as a member of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and cooperate with the Agency to facilitate inspections of its nuclear facilities.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Peru for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Demchenko (Ukraine): Mr. President, the repeated ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in particular the recent launches of four such missiles on 6 March, are not only a direct violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions but they are also a deliberate provocation against the existing system of international law. Ukraine strongly condemns such actions by Pyongyang and urges the international community to take additional measures to bring the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to justice. Current developments show that existing sanctions against

North Korea have proven to be insufficient. Ukraine confirms its determination to use all possible leverage in its capacity as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in order to bring North Korea back in line with international law.

The President: I thank the representative of Ukraine for his statement.

(*spoke in Russian*)

I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Ms. Ahmad Termizi (Malaysia): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, we would like to congratulate you on your assumption as the President of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of our delegation's full support.

We would like to join others in strongly condemning the launch of four ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March 2017. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has again manifested its rejection of calls by the international community to cease its ballistic missile launches. This action has fuelled regional tension and again demonstrated the disregard of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for peace and security in the Korean Peninsula, the region and the world in general.

The missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are a flagrant violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions and seriously undermine the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to end all ballistic missile launches and, of paramount importance, to conform to all Security Council resolutions concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. President, my delegation took note that references were made related to the use of a toxic chemical listed in schedule 1 of the Chemical Weapons Convention that led to the death of a North Korean national on 13 February 2017 at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2. Malaysia strongly condemns the use of such a chemical weapon by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. Its use at a public place could have endangered the general public.

Malaysia has fully cooperated with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and has complied entirely with all its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Malaysia does not produce, stockpile, import, export or use any schedule 1 toxic chemicals, including VX, and has made annual declarations to that effect to OPCW.

In this respect, the Government is in close contact with OPCW regarding the recent incident, and the latter has provided the Malaysian authorities with technical materials that have been requested to assist in the investigation. OPCW has further indicated its commitment to provide further assistance as required. The Government of Malaysia will fully cooperate with OPCW and the international organizations to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Malaysia for her statement and her congratulations on my assumption of the presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Ms. Dallafior (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, please allow me to congratulate you on your accession to this important office and to express our gratitude for the way in which you have been performing your task, including your efforts to come up with a programme of work.

I wished to take the floor because of the recent launch of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As it has done in the past in connection with previous launches, Switzerland strongly condemns these actions that infringe multiple resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. This test, which is linked to the country's nuclear programme, not only violates Security Council resolutions but also constitutes a danger to peace and security in the region and goes against the international

community's efforts regarding the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Switzerland is convinced that a solution to the nuclear and security issue in the Korean Peninsula can be found only through a negotiated diplomatic process. In this connection, Switzerland reiterates its support for the framework of the Six-Party Talks. Lastly, Switzerland urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to rejoin the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programme and to implement its safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In addition, it calls on all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so as soon as possible.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Switzerland for her congratulations on my assumption of the presidency and for supporting our efforts to draft a programme of work for the Conference. I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Donnelly (New Zealand): Mr. President, New Zealand wishes to add its voice to those condemning in the strongest possible terms the launch of multiple ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March. In a statement released yesterday, the Foreign Minister of New Zealand criticized the actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as highly provocative and deeply detrimental to regional and global security. It is frustrating that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to show such flagrant disregard for United Nations Security Council resolutions which prohibit all such missile launches. New Zealand strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease such tests and abide by its international obligations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of New Zealand for her statement.

There are no more names on the list of speakers. Would anyone else like to take the floor?

Before I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to make the following statement on behalf of my country.

The Russian Federation condemns the violation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the United Nations Security Council resolutions prohibiting ballistic missile tests and nuclear tests. We are following closely the situation as it unfolds on the Korean Peninsula, which in the last few days has become even more tense owing to a further missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March and the start of large-scale joint exercises by the armed forces of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea. In the circumstances, we urge all parties involved to exercise restraint and seriously reflect on the negative consequences of a further escalation in tension for security and stability in the region. We maintain our view that the way out of the current situation is to step up efforts to seek a political and diplomatic settlement of all the problems affecting the Korean Peninsula.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ju Yong-chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, my delegation categorically rejects all those politically motivated accusations made against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by several delegations.

First, South Korea is not entitled to talk about the self-defensive measures taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at a moment when they are conducting reckless joint military exercises with the United States which endanger the sovereignty and security of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Several speakers today voiced their concern over the situation of the Korean Peninsula and only expressed their condemnation against my country while deliberately ignoring the real threat that undermines peace and security in the region. In spite of repeated warnings from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the United States kicked off this month the largest-ever joint military exercise with South Korea. The annual joint military exercise is a typical expression of the hostile United States policy towards the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea and a major cause of escalation of tension that might turn into actual war. Therefore, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has long been demanding that the United States put an end to such war drills. However, successive United States administrations have pursued the expansion of nuclear war exercises with the aim of stifling the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at any cost.

The ongoing joint military exercise is being carried out with a massive mobilization of troops, unprecedented in size, and various types of United States strategic forces, including nuclear carriers, nuclear strategic bombers and stealth fighters. It would certainly jeopardize peace and stability in the region and drive the situation on the Korean Peninsula close to the brink of nuclear war.

In no way can the United States justify this overtly offensive military operation as defence-oriented, because the military exercise is in fact designed to conduct a pre-emptive nuclear attack against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. If those countries, including the Western countries, are worried about the situation on the Korean Peninsula and want to see the restoration of stability, they should raise their voices over this grave threat to peace and stability and demand that the United States immediately halt its military provocations against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The United Nations Security Council, for its part, should call into question the United States joint military exercise, instead of labelling the legitimate exercise by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its right to self-defence as a threat to international peace. The resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — which are manipulated by the United States and its followers — have no legal basis. There is no clause or article in the United Nations Charter or other related international legal instruments that stipulates nuclear tests, satellite launches or rocket test fires as an illegal act that undermines global peace and security. If so, then the United States nuclear blackmail against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and large-scale military exercises targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be brought into question first. However, the Security Council never said a single word about such a serious threat to peace and security and turned a blind eye to numerous nuclear and missile tests and satellite launches carried out by other countries, including the United States. This is an extreme manifestation of the double standards practised by the Security Council.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is firm in its determination to further bolster up its defence capabilities with nuclear deterrent as a pivot so as to put an end to the danger of nuclear war posed by the United States.

South Korea should refrain from collaborating with outside forces to put increased international pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and inventing new and nonsensical arguments by artificially linking involvement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in an incident that happened in Asia. Japan should not use this or take advantage of the aggravation of the situation on the Korean Peninsula for its ambitious goal of militarization and overseas expansion.

My delegation also strongly disagrees with the ridiculous and absurd logic of the United States representative that regular self-defence measures should be notified in advance. We also oppose the discussion of this issue, which is related to bilateral issues, at the Conference on Disarmament.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, first of all, I apologize for asking for the floor, but I wanted to shed some light on a couple of facts and react to the statement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

First, the THAAD system is purely defensive, and that is the only defensive measure that we can take on facing the massive threat posed by North Korea. In THAAD, the "T" stands for "terminal mode": we are confident that it does not pose any challenges to the current situation in a wider context.

Second, likewise, the current military exercises taking place this month are defensive and transparent. Two members of this chamber are supervising them, and several other members are taking part in the exercises. It does not make any sense at all that all these members would have the intention to attack North Korea. On the other hand, let me be clear: North Korea conducts throughout the year — over eight months a year — military exercises with full total mobilization, including their civilian population.

Turning to the statement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we are sick and tired of having to listen to their statements that come out of their collective delusion forced by a reign of terror in Pyongyang. The truth is obvious, if you bother to look at it. I say it is "collective delusion" because they refuse to look at the truth. The truth is that security is advanced not by trying to scare or threaten but by winning friends. As North Korea is repeatedly admitting, they are in isolation and no one in the international community is trying to help them. They know that. And because of that, since they know that, I once again urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to change their wrong calculation and try to make friends in the international community.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I apologize for taking the floor again, but I think I need to say a little something in response to the comments made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

I am not going to speak to the issue of the military exercises because I have already done so; and the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea very eloquently explained the nature of them as well. Let me just say that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to insist that United Nations Security Council resolutions are illegal. Security Council resolutions, as just about everyone in this chamber knows, are international law, and I recommend to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea representative that he read the Charter of the United Nations, first and foremost.

We have seen today a number of countries — across regions — who have expressed their condemnation about these ballistic missile launches. I think it should be very clear to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it is a pariah. It is an outlier. It is in violation of multiple Security Council resolutions and the countries represented in this room are not going to stand by and just let the Democratic People's Republic of Korea violate international law. That is why we have heard so many countries today speaking out against this reckless behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Only when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea realizes that it is isolated, that its best bet if it wants to come back to the good graces of the international community is to come into compliance with its obligations, then we can move forward. Until then, North Korea will continue to be isolated by its provocative and reckless behaviour.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement.

Does anyone else wish to take the floor? I recognize the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ju Yong-chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, my delegation is also not interested in engaging in the pointless and ridiculous arguments raised by South Korea. South Korea would be better advised to concentrate on cleaning up the domestic mess that has erupted per the recent disclosure of political scandal rather than accusing others of self-defensive measures.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains unchanged in its will and determination to bolster up, in every way, its military capability for self-defence as long as the United States refuses to abandon its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is the United States who compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to have access to and strengthen its nuclear deterrent. In other words, the United States hostile policy and nuclear war drills targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are to be blamed for the current escalation of tension.

The joint military exercises at the doorstep of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are an outrageous infringement of the sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and are open provocations. The United States openly announced that the joint military exercises this year would involve rehearsals to design in more detail the four-dimension operation for a pre-emptive attack on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with precision strike means. This shows that the exercise is not defence-oriented. The grave situation today proves that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made the right choice to strengthen its defence capabilities.

The United States is also taking advantage of its privileged State position at the United Nations to misuse international instruments and organizations as a tool for its sinister political purposes. The manipulation of the United Nations Security Council by the United States to produce groundless accusations and illegal resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a clear example. In February, the United States test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile with a range of over 10,000 kilometres from a nuclear submarine. However, the Security Council, instead of questioning this test fire, kept silent about it. Such a double standard is intolerable.

Since the United Nations Secretariat failed to provide clear clarification on the legal basis for sanctions resolutions imposed against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over its nuclear tests and test fires of rockets, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has proposed to hold an international forum to have a public discussion on the legal basis for sanctions resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Security Council should not turn its back on this proposal and should properly handle the issue on the principle of impartiality and international justice.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Before I give the floor to the representative of Peru, I would ask that members refrain from referring to bilateral relations in statements, and in particular to the internal political affairs of any State.

I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Ms. Masana García (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I just want to make a few clarifications in response to the delegate of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. He said that this could lead to nuclear war in the region and that the Conference on Disarmament is not an appropriate forum to discuss a bilateral issue. He may well be correct that the issue is a bilateral one but its effects are global. My country in particular is highly concerned by this issue, which is why the communication I read out was issued yesterday. I would like to state to the delegate that all of the world's countries are extremely worried by this situation and that this is indeed an appropriate forum in which to discuss such issues multilaterally.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Peru for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Górgolas (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, Spain supports the statement made by the European Union in condemnation of the ballistic missile tests carried out by North Korea. We would also like to draw attention to the words written in bronze on the doors of this chamber. They are in Latin, a language that once facilitated communication between peoples; few people study Latin nowadays and know what this says. The left side of the door refers to the peaceful resolution of international disputes. It is not necessary to resort to a show of strength to assert one's position; words alone are enough. We have judges and we have international law that, at such times, is represented by the resolutions of the Security Council. On the right-hand side, it says that only barbarians use force to establish their positions. Civilized peoples cherish peace and seek to preserve it. That is the message that we want to send again, these many centuries after Vázquez de Menchaca wrote those words.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Spain for his statement.

Does anyone else wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

Before closing today's meeting, I would like — in recognition of International Women's Day tomorrow, 8 March — to wish all the women present in this room happiness, health, success, prosperity and all the very best.

This concludes our work for today. The next plenary meeting will be held on Tuesday, 14 March, at 10 a.m. I would also like to remind you that on Friday, 10 March, at 10 a.m., I intend to convene informal consultations, in this room, on the new Russian proposal circulated yesterday for a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and thirteenth plenary meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 14 March 2017, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Alexey Borodavkin.....(Russian Federation)

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The President (*spoke in Russian*): I call to order the 1413th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, before we begin our work today, I would like to warmly welcome our new colleague who has only just taken up her duties as her Government's representative at the Conference: Ambassador Maria Nazareth Farani Azevêdo, the Permanent Representative of Brazil. Allow me to take this opportunity, on behalf of my Government and of the Conference, to assure you, Madam Ambassador, of our full cooperation and support in the fulfilment of your new responsibilities.

As I said in the informal plenary meeting on Friday, 10 March, I propose the following order of business for our meeting today. I would like to begin by presenting information on the work carried out by the presidency over the previous week and then give the floor to delegates who wish to speak in plenary. I will then close the formal plenary meeting and we will have an informal plenary meeting in order to continue discussing the draft decision on the Conference's programme of work for 2017.

If there are no objections to this order of business, I will now say a few words on the work carried out by the presidency.

In my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, I have distributed — with the assistance of the Conference secretariat — an official proposal on a programme of work for the Conference, contained in document CD/WP.600. We endeavoured to accommodate the comments of our colleagues as far as possible in this document, but many of the comments were incompatible. As a result, the Russian presidency was unable to fully reflect all of the comments, although we did our utmost to ensure that the revised document is close to the consensus.

I will focus on the specific changes made since the previous draft.

In the first preambular paragraph, the word "role" has been changed to the stronger "responsibility".

In the fifth preambular paragraph, the phrase "illegal non-State militarized groups" has been deleted. Despite the fact that some members would have preferred to change it to something more general, we considered the statement contradictory and open to ambiguous interpretation by other delegations.

Preambular paragraph 6 has been expanded by adding the words "access to" after the word "possible" in reference to biological and toxin materials. This is because chemical weapons have already been used by terrorists on multiple occasions, but access to and use of biological materials — although, thankfully, not yet a reality — present a real and growing threat, and we must not allow this threat to materialize.

Preambular paragraph 9 has been changed to remove a reference to the working groups, which we have done without altering the meaning of the paragraph.

Responding to the requests of Conference members, we added a new second part to preambular paragraph 13 which reads, and I quote: "and emphasizing the need to resume substantive work".

Following consultations with the secretariat, operative paragraph 8 — which made reference to rules 30 and 31 of the Conference's rules of procedure — has been deleted. We acted on the premise that the Conference, its working groups and their subsidiary bodies would in all cases be guided by the rules of procedure anyway.

I believe that, as a result of these amendments, our draft is ever closer to reaching a consensus. I intend to hold another informal round of consultations immediately after this plenary meeting in order to give the floor to delegates who have not been able to speak or were not able to attend on Friday, 10 March.

Following this, if, by 6 p.m. on Thursday, 16 March, no delegate has given a clear indication of unwillingness to join the consensus for any reason, we will present the Conference's draft programme of work for adoption on Friday, 17 March, at the morning plenary meeting of the Conference.

However, if we receive indications that consensus has not been reached on the draft programme of work, we will inform the plenary meeting on the morning of 17 March of the lack of consensus, and also take stock of the Russian presidency.

I thank you for your attention. We will now proceed to the discussion.

Brazil is first on the list of speakers. Madam Ambassador, you have the floor.

Ms. Azevêdo (Brazil): Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Let me express the appreciation of Brazil for your efforts in seeking to advance the work of this forum. Please rest assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the discharge of your duties.

I am truly honoured to represent my country in the Conference on Disarmament. Allow me to recognize that disarmament lies at the heart of our calling as diplomats. It harks back to the very beginning of the State order. It is one of the valuable elements of the old diplomacy, which sought the alignment of common goods with national and regional interests, the preference for the possible over the merely desirable and the cultivation of what we know today as "confidence-building measures".

Disarmament is therefore essential for the strengthening of international peace and security, the prevention of nuclear war, respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and the economic and social advancement of all human beings. The continued nuclear and conventional arms race not only threatens human life with mutual destruction but deprives humanity of enormous resources, both material and human, which could instead be made available for the purpose of economic and social development. It also runs counter to the new global consensus on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Like most delegations in this room, Brazil is very concerned about the stalemate that has been preventing the adoption and implementation of a programme of work since 1996, but we continue to believe that it is possible to revitalize the Conference and break its long-lasting deadlock. That depends essentially on political will, good faith and renewed efforts by all delegations.

Mr. President, I would like to reaffirm that nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority for Brazil among the core issues of the Conference on Disarmament. Nuclear weapons are the sole anthropogenic factor that can instantly destroy humanity and irreversibly change the Earth. Unlike chemical and biological weapons — the other two categories of weapons of mass destruction — nuclear weapons are not explicitly and comprehensively prohibited. Yet, the consequences of a nuclear weapon detonation, notably from a humanitarian perspective, are far more devastating and diffuse than the effects of chemical and biological weapons. Lack of progress on nuclear disarmament underscores a dangerous absence of political will and urgency on the part of States that mistakenly feel comfortable and safe with the current status quo.

Over the past few years, Brazil has been actively engaged in the Humanitarian Initiative, which has led to the convening of a United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. Past experience in disarmament has demonstrated that, first, a legally binding norm has to be established in order to pave the way for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, we believe that a prohibition treaty will provide a point of departure for the actual elimination of nuclear weapons, as was the case with biological and chemical weapons — first outlawed by the 1925 Geneva Protocol and subsequently banned, in a comprehensive manner, by the Biological Weapons Convention in 1972 and the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993.

Brazil encourages all United Nations Members to support and participate actively in the forthcoming negotiations. A prohibition treaty will complement and strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, in particular with respect to the implementation of article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Non-nuclear-weapon States which decide to take part in the negotiations will reaffirm their commitment never to acquire nuclear weapons as well as reinforce their own credentials and the non-proliferation regime. We also consider that additional measures aimed at the complete elimination of

nuclear arsenals and verification of compliance can be pursued within a framework laid out by the prohibition treaty itself.

Mr. President, the Brazilian delegation remains ready to engage constructively and contribute to the efforts to break the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome the decision adopted by the Conference to establish a working group to discuss the way ahead. We hope the activities of the working group as well as the informal consultations undertaken by the presidency will contribute to the adoption of a programme of work as soon as possible.

Brazil will join the consensus emerging from consultations on the draft programme of work submitted to the consideration of the Conference on Disarmament. However, we believe that a programme of work should encompass a negotiating mandate on at least one of the core issues. As a matter of priority, Brazil favours the establishment of a subsidiary body within the Conference in order to start negotiations on nuclear disarmament, but we are also prepared to consider proposals for the commencement of negotiations on the remaining core issues, namely, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, a fissile material treaty and negative security assurances.

To conclude, Mr. President, with regard to a fissile material treaty, Brazil welcomes the beginning of discussions in 2017 in the context of the high-level expert preparatory group, and we highlight the importance of a prohibition against the production of or the use of already existing fissile material for nuclear weapons and the placing of all such fissile material under international safeguards.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank you, Madam Ambassador, and I once again welcome you to the Conference on Disarmament and reiterate that we are ready and willing to cooperate closely with you. I would also like to thank you for your warm words of greeting to the Russian presidency of the Conference.

Next on the list of speakers is the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic. You have the floor.

Mr. Aala (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time at this formal meeting, I wish to congratulate you on the way in which you are conducting the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament. We fully appreciate the significant efforts undertaken by the Russian presidency and its determination to break the stalemate by presenting a draft programme of work for the Conference.

I also wish to thank the Permanent Representative of Romania for the firm action he took during his presidency, and to commend Mr. Michael Møller, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, on his support for the work of the Conference. I hereby reaffirm my delegation's willingness to cooperate fully with you all in this regard. I also wish to join you in welcoming the new colleague, the Permanent Representative of Brazil. We assure her of our full cooperation and wish her success in her mission.

Mr. President, disarmament and arms control form part of the system for the maintenance of international peace and security, and the Charter of the United Nations calls for cooperation to achieve that aim. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that multilateral treaties which are consistent with the Charter are the only sustainable means of addressing international disarmament and security issues. It underscores the need for all legal instruments pertaining to disarmament to be negotiated in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole relevant multilateral negotiating body, and it stresses the need to respect the principle of consensus in its work so that the security concerns of all States are taken into account.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its principled position regarding the priority of all aspects of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and it emphasizes the need to combine efforts to achieve nuclear non-proliferation with concurrent efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament. Progress on both tracks is an indispensable precondition for the strengthening of international peace and security. The tenth special session of the General Assembly identified nuclear disarmament as a top priority because of the unprecedented threat of nuclear weapons to human existence. Moreover, as a multilateral legal obligation,

it should not be conditional on confidence-building measures or other disarmament efforts. In this regard, we reaffirm the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that negotiations aimed at producing a legally binding instrument conducive to comprehensive nuclear disarmament, under strict and effective international control, must be continued and concluded in good faith. Syria emphasizes the need to launch negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament as a matter of urgency in order to achieve that objective.

My country supports action in the Conference on Disarmament to draft an internationally binding treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons in the context of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work for the Conference. It should take into consideration negotiations concerning the four main issues on the agenda relating to nuclear weapons. Accordingly, it should be applicable to stockpiles of such material, which should be verifiable, and it should require the destruction of existing stockpiles of fissile material as well as any new material that has been produced.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of their use. This being the case, Syria underscores the need for the States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that possess nuclear weapons to comply with their obligations not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, or against areas that are free of nuclear weapons, at any time and under any circumstances, pursuant to the agreement reached by consensus at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which reaffirmed previous agreements to provide effective, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding security guarantees to all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty, and to launch negotiations on a universal binding instrument aimed at providing such guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States.

Syria reiterates its support for the joint draft Treaty of the Russian Federation and China on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects. Based on the initiative introduced to the Conference in 2008 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, it makes a constructive contribution to the work of the Conference and lays the foundation for the adoption of a legally binding international instrument leading to the prevention of an arms race in outer space and emphasizing the peaceful use of outer space.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes an important step towards the global elimination of nuclear weapons and contributes to nuclear non-proliferation. It is essential in this connection for nuclear-weapon States to provide unconditional guarantees to all countries in the region regarding the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons, to ratify the protocols to all treaties providing for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, to withdraw any reservations or interpretative declarations that are inconsistent with the objectives or purposes of such treaties, and to respect the status of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Notwithstanding the provision for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991); notwithstanding the decision by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference to extend the Treaty indefinitely, based on an integrated package comprising the adoption of a resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East; and notwithstanding the reaffirmation of that aim at subsequent NPT Review Conferences, most recently in 2010, the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East continues to be confronted by the intransigence of Israel, the only party in the region that possesses nuclear, biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction, and by its refusal to accede to any of the relevant legal instruments on disarmament and elimination of weapons of mass destruction, to relinquish such weapons and to subject its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The failure to convene in 2012 the conference on the establishment of a Middle East weapon-free zone contravenes the letter and spirit of the collective agreement contained in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We express our deep regret at the artificial obstacles and excuses that precluded the convening of the conference by the parties concerned. We also deplore the failure of the United Nations to play a role in the preparatory meetings for the convening of the conference and reaffirm the need for the United Nations to serve as an

umbrella organization for the purpose. In the light of the current preparations for the 2020 NPT Review Conference, and given the failure of the 2015 Conference owing to the renunciation by some States, including the Treaty depositary States, of their responsibilities and obligations under the Treaty, Syria emphasizes that the establishment of such a zone is an integral part of States parties' obligations under the Treaty and calls upon all States parties to respect that obligation.

Mr. President, chemical terrorism and the risk of terrorist groups acquiring and using chemical weapons or toxic chemical materials in diverse locations pose a serious and growing threat. While we reiterate our condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals by anybody in any location at any time, the continued access by terrorist groups, such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Nusrah Front and other terrorist organizations within and outside Syria, to toxic chemicals is extremely dangerous, and States must assume responsibility and comply with their obligations to prevent it. In this context, we express our support for the important initiative by the Russian Federation aimed at confronting the threat of biological and chemical terrorism by promoting effective international cooperation in the face of this growing threat and developing an appropriate response and preventive action.

In the light of the foregoing, Mr. President, my delegation welcomes your proposal to the Conference of a draft programme of work for this year's session. As we stated during the informal meeting last Friday, we believe that this proposal is a step in the right direction. We hope that it will be adopted as the basis for negotiations in the near future on nuclear disarmament and on the development of a convention on the elimination of biological and chemical terrorism.

The President *(spoke in Russian)*: I thank the Ambassador for his statement, for the warm words extended to the presidency and for his support.

The next speaker on the list is the Ambassador of Pakistan. You have the floor.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): Mr. President, I would also like to thank you very much for all your efforts in trying to have some consensus on a programme of work. We would like to express our support for your efforts and also the work that you undertake in this regard and hope that it meets with success.

I would also like to begin by welcoming Ambassador Maria Nazareth Farani Azevêdo to the Conference on Disarmament. I wish her all success in her new responsibilities here. She knows Geneva well and I am sure she will be — she is — a very valuable member of our community here.

Mr. President, I shall depart from Geneva over the coming weekend to assume my new responsibilities in Islamabad. As this is probably the last time that I am taking the floor in the plenary of the Conference on Disarmament as the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva, including the Conference on Disarmament, I wish to make some farewell remarks and share a few personal reflections.

This is my third tenure of duty in Geneva and it turned out to be the shortest, around one year and half. During this brief yet eventful stay, Pakistan held the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament as well as of the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We also had the pleasure of serving as Vice-President and Facilitator at the Eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Mr. President, despite all the challenges confronting the international security and disarmament landscape, my latest experience renewed my faith in multilateralism and in the potential of the Conference on Disarmament, and I mean that. The Conference is a unique and unparalleled forum that deals with vital issues concerning the supreme national security interests of States. It allows all militarily significant States of the world to interact on an equal footing and explore meaningful solutions to the issues on the Conference's agenda.

The Conference on Disarmament has been remarkably successful in producing landmark treaties, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Of late, the results produced by the Conference on Disarmament

seem to be falling short of expectations, but the forum itself cannot be faulted for this situation. Its structure and procedures are geared to producing productive outcomes. The vital element that must be added is scrupulous adherence to the cardinal principle of equal and undiminished security for all States. A consistent observance of this principle will unlock the ongoing stalemate, and we are sure that your proposal in this regard can help us move forward.

Any possible solution, whether it is pursued inside or outside the Conference on Disarmament, no matter how well-intentioned or justified, will not work if it leaves any State feeling disproportionately vulnerable. There is simply no shortcut to building and strengthening a durable international security architecture.

Mr. President, it is our collective responsibility to revitalize this forum through a genuinely cooperative and non-discriminatory effort that would lead to the start of negotiations on equitable treaties. Discrimination against States and arbitrary revisionism of the global nuclear order have to be shunned. It is important to evolve non-discriminatory and equitable criteria for the membership of non-nuclear-weapon States in multilateral export control regimes, including the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and for trade and peaceful nuclear technologies. New realities and the legitimate right of all States to live in peace must be recognized and respected.

I firmly believe that the Conference retains the ability to undertake meaningful initiatives that result in enhanced security for all States. For that to take place, we might have to dial down our insistence on restricting this forum to the ideal situation of holding treaty negotiations all the time. We need to utilize this forum realistically and productively by having the flexibility to hold substantive discussions on the existing agenda items as well as on new security-related issues. Only then can we build convergences and narrow down our differences, paving the way for even more substantive negotiations.

Otherwise, we run the risk of remaining mired in a clash of competing maximalist approaches and priorities. With some guarded optimism, I see the working group on the way ahead as offering a promising opportunity to undertake a holistic yet pragmatic review of the Conference's activities. I thank my remaining colleague for taking this initiative.

The latest proposal offered by you, Mr. President, can also go a very long way in getting the Conference on Disarmament back to substantive work. A breakthrough requires creativity and realism, along with an acute appreciation of redlines that ought not to be crossed. In other words, it requires a sustained display of diplomatic skills, which are present in such rich abundance in this forum. We only need to put them into practice.

Mr. President, an issue that has remained close to my heart throughout my diplomatic career is that of women's empowerment and the promotion of women's participation, particularly in areas related to security policy. The equal, full and effective participation of both men and women is one of the essential factors for the attainment of sustainable peace and security. I tried to promote this issue during the presidency of Pakistan last year in the Conference, including by holding a special informal plenary on women and disarmament. We have to constantly sensitize ourselves and the broader international community to this imperative. I was greatly encouraged by the positive feedback and response from all Conference members on this matter.

Mr. President, although I am leaving Geneva, I shall still closely follow developments at the Conference on Disarmament in my new position.

For the unstinting support, generous cooperation and warm friendship that was extended to me during my stay, I wish to thank each one of you: the Ambassadors, the delegates of fellow member States, our wonderful hosts — the Government of Switzerland and the City of Geneva, and the secretariat, ably led by Mr. Michael Møller and assisted by remarkably dedicated officers like Ms. Soliman, who can fight and can be hard as nails when the issue comes up — and I thank her very much for the support she provided us in trying to get the conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons started, when we were getting the process done — and Mr. Kalbusch, who is always there smiling and ready to help, as well as the conference services staff, the interpreters and the many others working behind the scenes.

I also wish to express my special gratitude to my own delegation, especially Mr. Usman Jadoon, my constant shadow in the Conference on Disarmament and other arms control-related issues. I thank him very much for his hard work, his consistent support and for being brilliant as he is.

As a last word, on 17 March there will be a commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the independence of Pakistan. We have an event in the plenary hall followed by a reception, to which you are all invited. It would be a great opportunity. This will be my last event in Geneva and it will be my goodbye. But, as my French friends often say: never say "adieu", always say "au revoir". So, I say "au revoir" and thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I sincerely thank Ambassador Janjua for her statement and, on behalf of the presidency, I would also like to say a few words.

Madam Ambassador, on behalf of all my colleagues I would like to thank you for your work with the Conference on Disarmament. We are all greatly appreciative of your exceptional professionalism, commitment and persistence in promoting the interests of Pakistan at the Conference. At the same time, we are grateful to you for the exceptional kindness and friendliness you have shown in your participation over the year and a half that you have represented Pakistan at the Conference. We thank you as well for your intellectual contributions to the work of other disarmament forums that have taken place on the international stage in Geneva during this period.

We will miss you, of course, but I sincerely hope that your new high-level post in Islamabad will allow you to make regular visits to Geneva to meet with old friends. We wish you prosperity, inexhaustible energy and every success in diplomacy. It goes without saying that we, the delegation of the Russian Federation and myself specifically, will be attending the events celebrating Pakistani Independence Day. I thank you for your attention.

I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Ms. Yaron (Israel): Mr. President, as this is the first time our delegation is taking the floor during your presidency, please allow me to convey our appreciation for the way you are conducting our deliberations and assure you of our full support in the conduct of your duties.

Mr. President, I would like to reply to comments made towards my country by our Syrian colleague. Israel recognizes the importance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its contribution to the global non-proliferation regime and regrets that the 2015 NPT Review Conference ended without a consensus outcome document. However, blame for the Review Conference's lack of agreement on issues relating to the Middle East at the NPT cannot be placed at the doorsteps of Israel, despite the earlier speaker's claim.

Israel participated in the Review Conference as an observer for the first time after 20 years. This was done as part and parcel of our constructive engagement in the direct regional dialogue between Israel and some of its neighbours, facilitated by Finnish Ambassador Laajava to address the broad range of security challenges facing the region, as well as the arrangements necessary for convening a conference in Helsinki on the establishment of the Middle East as a zone free of wars, conflicts and all weapons of mass destruction and delivery means. Despite five rounds of consultations in Switzerland, which were conducted in a substantive and business-like manner, and despite the willingness of Israel to participate in a sixth round, the Arab group chose to discontinue these talks. It is high time that the Arab group chooses the road of conciliation, direct consultation and the building of trust over the road of confrontation and hostility.

Israel continues to believe that direct dialogue addressing the broad range of security chalienges between the regional parties is fundamental for any meaningful consensual discussion in this matter. Israel, for its part, will continue to seek such a meaningful regional discussion that could lead to a more peaceful and secure Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Israel for her statement and for her greetings to the presidency.

I now give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, I have asked for the floor, first, to express my welcome to the Ambassador of Brazil, Maria. I had the pleasure and honour of observing her work in my former capacity as adviser to the Director-General of the World Health Organization. I know how effective she is, so I look forward to working with her.

To Ambassador Temina Janjua, I would like to say that it was a great honour and pleasure to work with you, not only on disarmament but also on other issues. We benefited a lot from your insight and wisdom. I wish you all the best. I also want to congratulate you on your well-deserved promotion, and just to say that you will be sorely missed here in Geneva. All the best, Madam.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement and now give the floor to the Ambassador of Syria.

Mr. Aala (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, I would like to associate myself fully with the statement made by my colleague from China, who expressed our feelings of sadness at the departure of our colleague, the Permanent Representative of Pakistan, who will be sorely missed. I also wish to congratulate her on the new functions that she will assume in her country and on her important contribution to the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, I would like to emphasize one point relating to the statement made by Israel in response to our observations. The basic threat to security and stability in our region stems from the fact that Israel alone possesses weapons of mass destruction. It is the only party in the region that possesses nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and the only party that refuses to accede to all international multilateral treaties aimed at eliminating such weapons. Syria has taken vigorous action to achieve the goal of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone. For instance, it submitted a draft resolution on the establishment of such a zone in 2003 shortly before its membership of the Security Council came to an end. The resolution was not adopted, for reasons that I will refrain from discussing at present, but we still expect the Council to fulfil its duty and to adopt the resolution. Secondly, we have already referred to the artificial obstacles and impediments that precluded the convening of the 2012 conference. These obstacles persist, including the refusal by Israel to allow the United Nations to play a role in the preparatory meetings for the conference and its refusal to hold the conference under the umbrella of the United Nations. This was one of the key factors that led to its failure. I therefore reiterate the points I have made in this area.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement.

This brings me to the end of the list of speakers, and I do not see anyone else wishing to take the floor.

I recognize New Zealand.

Ms. Donnelly (New Zealand): Mr. President, I had not intended to take the floor, but I did want to take this opportunity to convey my deep appreciation for the important role that Ambassador Janjua has played during her time in Geneva. Her diplomatic skills and professionalism are well known to all and have been commented on already by others in the chamber. I can only echo those. I did want also to thank her on a personal level for the inspiration she has provided — and, I have no doubt, will continue to provide — to women in diplomacy and in the area of disarmament and arms control, in particular.

Ambassador, your intelligence, kindness, sense of humour and encouragement will be sorely missed. On behalf of the New Zealand delegation, I wish you all the very best for the future and congratulations on your appointment.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of New Zealand for her statement. As there are no other speakers, I would like to add something to my opening statement.

Among the amendments that we made to document CD/WP.600, containing the draft programme of work for the Conference, in operative paragraph 2 the Russian Federation proposed that Ambassador Yury Ambrazevich of Belarus be appointed Co-

Chair of the working group on an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism. I wish to draw your attention to this amendment to the document.

If there are no further speakers today, I will close the plenary meeting and I remind members that we will now hold informal consultations.

I declare the plenary meeting closed.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

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English

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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 17 March 2017, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Alexey Borodavkin.....(Russian Federation)

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The President (*spoke in Russian*): I call to order the 1414th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, Ms. Soliman, ladies and gentlemen, as I said at the plenary meeting on Tuesday, 14 March, and in subsequent informal discussions, I do not intend to move today to the adoption of the draft decision contained in document CD/WP.600, in view of the fact that consensus has unfortunately not yet been reached on the draft programme of work proposed by the Russian delegation.

Since this is the last plenary meeting held under the presidency of the Russian Federation, I propose to proceed as follows. I shall begin by giving the floor to delegations that wish to speak. I will then share some thoughts on the work of the Conference over the past four weeks under the presidency of the Russian Federation.

I should now like to turn to the list of speakers. The first speaker on the list is Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Group of 21. I give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The meeting is resumed. The representative of Nigeria has the floor.

Mr. Amieyeofori (Nigeria): Mr. President, I have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Group of 21.

> At the outset, the Group congratulates you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and expresses its appreciation for the open, transparent and efficient manner through which you are guiding the proceedings of the Conference. The Group would also like to extend its gratitude to the successive Presidents of the Conference last year for the efforts they deployed as a contribution to allow the Conference to resume substantive work, including negotiations at the earliest, and end the long impasse.
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> Mr. President, the Group of 21 would like to stress, once again, that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum mandated by the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament and emphasize the importance of preserving it by strengthening the nature, role and mandate of this body. We must underscore the need to redouble our efforts in order to reinforce and revitalize the Conference and preserve its credibility through the resumption of substantive work, including, inter alia, negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The Group of 21 reaffirms its working papers submitted to the Conference in 2016 on nuclear disarmament, on the follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, on negative security assurances, on prevention of an arms race in outer space and on the work of the Conference.
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> Nuclear disarmament continues to be the highest priority of the international community. The Group of 21 reiterates its deep concern at the danger posed to the survival of humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. The Group, stressing its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, underscores the urgent need to commence negotiations on this issue in the Conference without further delay. As the highest priority, the Conference should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time. In this context, the Group recalls its working paper contained in document CD/2063 that calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, in particular on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

The Group welcomes the formal proclamation, for the first time in history, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 28 and 29 January 2014, which includes the commitment of all States of that region to further nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to contribute to general and complete disarmament. Hopefully, this proclamation will be followed by other political proclamations of zones of peace in other regions of the world. The Group welcomes the Political Declaration of Quito, adopted at the Fourth Summit of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Quito, Ecuador, on 27 January 2016, which reaffirms the commitment of CELAC to the preservation of peace and international security, political independence and nuclear disarmament conducive to general, total and verifiable disarmament. The Group also welcomes the Political Declaration of Punta Cana, adopted at the Fifth Summit of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 25 January 2017, which reaffirms, inter alia, the commitment of CELAC to achieve a total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. CELAC reaffirms its commitment to the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace and highlights its character as the first-ever zone free of nuclear weapons, established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The Group welcomes the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 14 February 2017 in Mexico in the framework of the twenty-fifth session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Group reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas. The Group welcomes the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disarmament on 26 September 2013 and reaffirms its related resolution 71/71 to follow up to this meeting. As the former Secretary-General of the United Nations rightly mentioned in the Conference on Disarmament in 2015: "The high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority and deserves attention at the highest levels." In this vein, the Group fully supports the goals of this resolution, in particular its call for an urgent decision by the Conference to commence negotiations on nuclear disarmament, particularly a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. The Group of 21 will make a separate statement in the Conference plenary on this issue. The Group also welcomes the decision to convene, no later than 2018, a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard. The Group welcomes with appreciation the establishment of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly organized every year to commemorate and promote this international day, highlighting the events around the world in commemoration of this day, and calls on Governments, parliaments and civil society to take further action annually to commemorate the day.

The Group reaffirms the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery. It notes the report of the Open-Ended Working Group mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, and hopes that it would contribute towards negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference, particularly a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. To this end, the Group takes note of General Assembly resolution 71/258, on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which calls on all Member States to participate in the 2017 United Nations conference to negotiate a legally

binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of such weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a matter of high priority. The Group expresses concern that despite the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States and long-standing requests by non-nuclear-weapon States to receive such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been achieved in this regard. It is a matter of concern that non-nuclear-weapon States implicitly or explicitly have been subject to nuclear threats by some nuclear-weapon States contrary to their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. The Group also calls for the commencement of negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/75.

The Group concurs with the former United Nations Secretary-General, in his statement delivered on 23 May 2015, that there is a growing understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and in this regard welcomes the hosting of the conferences on this subject, convened in Oslo on 4 and 5 March 2015, in Mexico on 13 and 14 February 2014 and in Vienna on 8 and 9 November 2014.

In this context, the Group expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear-weapon detonation and its long-term catastrophic consequences on human health, environment and other vital economic resources, thus endangering the life of present and future generations. The Group believes that the full realization of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches, efforts and international commitments towards nuclear disarmament through an inclusive process involving all States.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) welcome the spirit of the findings of the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. We call on all nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty to implement their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI. Given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and unacceptable risks and threats associated with a nuclear-weapon detonation, we will endeavour to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. In this regard, we note the relevant resolutions adopted at the seventy-first session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. President, the Group of 21 expresses its disappointment that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to undertake substantive work on its agenda. The Group takes note of the various efforts to reach consensus on the Conference's programme of work and all subsequent decisions, efforts and proposals towards this end.

The Group reiterates the urgency for the Conference to execute its mandate as set out at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and also to adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on the basis of its agenda, while taking into account the security interests of all States and dealing with, inter alia, the core issues, including nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the rules of procedure, including the rule of consensus. The Group encourages you, Mr. President, to spare no efforts and to continue wide consultations with all delegations to the Conference to achieve this goal.

The Group furthermore believes that promoting the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery hinges on the need to exercise political will, taking into account the collective security interests of all States.

While expressing its deep concern over the persistent lack of consensus on the implementation of the multilateral disarmament agenda in the United Nations disarmament machinery, particularly in fulfilling the commitments on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, the Group reaffirms its support for an early convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and expresses its deep concern over the fact that the special session is yet to be convened. The Group welcomes General Assembly decision 71/551 of 23 December 2015 by which the Assembly decided that the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should submit a report on its work, including possible substantive recommendations, before the end of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

The Group of 21 reiterates the importance of the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and deeply regrets the delay of concrete actions to that end.

The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT express their disappointment and deep concern that three States parties, including two States that bear special responsibility as NPT depositaries and co-sponsor States of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East, blocked consensus on the draft outcome document of the ninth NPT Review Conference, including the process to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as contained in the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. This could undermine efforts towards strengthening the NPT regime as a whole. The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT reaffirm that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East continues to constitute the basis for the establishment of such a zone and that the 1995 resolution remains valid until fully implemented. The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT also express their serious concern over the lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution and, in accordance with paragraph 6 of that resolution, call upon all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, and reaffirm that the co-sponsors of the resolution must take all the necessary measures to fully implement it without further delay. The members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT express their utmost concern that the persistent lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution, contrary to the decisions made at the relevant NPT Review Conferences, erodes the credibility of the NPT and disrupts the delicate balance among its three pillars, taking into account that the indefinite extension of the Treaty is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. In this context, the members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT reaffirm the urgency of accession by Israel to the Treaty without further delay and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. While the lack of agreement on an outcome document could undermine the NPT regime, the members of the Group of 21 that are States parties to the NPT emphasize the continued validity of the commitments made in 1995, 2000 and 2010, particularly the unequivocal undertaking towards nuclear disarmament, and calls for their full implementation without further delay.

The Group recognizes the importance of continuing consultations on the question of the possibility of expansion of the membership of the Conference.

Mr. President, the Group also recognizes the importance of enhancing engagement between civil society and the Conference on Disarmament, according to decisions taken by the Conference, and continues to support the strengthening of the

Conference's interaction with civil society. In this regard, the Group welcomes the convening of the Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum on 19 March 2015 and the second informal civil society forum on 22 June 2016.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and also for the words of support addressed to the Russian presidency from him and the Group of 21.

I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Ms. Bolaños Pérez (Guatemala): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament. We join previous speakers in commending you and your team for the conduct of the work of the Conference over the past four weeks and for the initiatives carried out. The members of the informal group of observer States are not speaking on the merits of the draft decision presented last Tuesday, but regret that the members of the Conference could not reach consensus. We appreciate all those who worked towards the adoption of a programme of work with a view to beginning substantive work, including the delegation of the Russian Federation.

We are most disappointed that, once again, this forum was not able to adopt a comprehensive and balanced programme of work in accordance with rule 29 of the rules of procedure. Twenty-one consecutive years of paralysis is a reminder of the fact that the Conference on Disarmament does not represent anymore an international community that demands inclusive participation in negotiations on ways to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, on disarmament in general and on collective security. The Conference on Disarmament should fulfil its crucial role of negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties according to its mandate. While the observer States recognize the efforts of the President of the Conference to break the deadlock and reach agreement on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, the long-awaited breakthrough has not been achieved. Renewed efforts are required to reach agreement and this will continue to require substantial political will and innovative thinking from all members. What could and should be done is to increase the Conference's transparency and its accessibility. The expansion of the membership of the Conference would contribute to the inclusiveness of this body, as would the recognition of the beneficial contribution of civil society. Also, it is important to review and update the working methods of the Conference.

Mr. President, despite the backdrop, the informal group of observer States looks forward to the work of the working group on the way ahead and the opportunity this forum represents in allowing a fruitful and concrete debate on the enlargement of the Conference. The members of the informal group of observer States firmly believe that the goal of disarmament is achievable if we work pragmatically and constructively together. With that in mind, we look forward to working with all Conference members to contribute to restart the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts in the Conference that are long overdue. We would like to reiterate our strong commitment to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation goals through a comprehensive, inclusive and effective engagement within the Conference and its subsidiary organs. We encourage the upcoming presidencies of the Conference to keep making all efforts in order to adopt a balanced and comprehensive programme of work for the current session.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Guatemala for her statement and for the words of support addressed to the Russian presidency.

I have come to the end of the list of speakers. Does anyone else wish to take the floor? I recognize Iran; you have the floor.

Mr. Heidari (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, my Ambassador was very keen to deliver a statement but, due to another urgent meeting, he had to leave. I will therefore say something on his behalf during your presidency.

Since this is the first time we are taking the floor under your presidency, at the outset we would like to convey to you, Mr. President, our warm commendation on your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and express our deep appreciation for the

very professional manner in which you have been presiding over the Conference during your tenure of office.

As to our deliberations on the programme of work, we commend your best efforts and desire and, in particular, your country's pledge to make every effort to see the adoption of a programme of work for the 2017 session of the Conference on Disarmament. That manifests the good intentions and genuine energy you have put into conducting consultations in a very inclusive and transparent manner on the Russian presidency's draft programme of work to take forward the work of the Conference as the single multilateral negotiating disarmament forum. We note that such a situation as putting forward a proposal by the President, which encompasses many ideas and views duly reflected in the proposal, was not an easy task. Given the intricacy of the programme of work for the Conference, we value your best efforts in showing your responsibility as the second President of the Conference on Disarmament for 2017.

Mr. President, we are convinced that the continued trend of open and transparent consultation in an exemplary manner which your delegation has resolutely followed to bring the Conference to real work would pave the way for consensual adoption of the Conference's balanced and comprehensive programme of work for this year.

The President *(spoke in Russian)*: I thank the representative of Iran for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Kihurani (Kenya): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, I wish to express appreciation for the way you have been conducting the work of the Conference on Disarmament and I assure you of my delegation's continued support for your endeavours.

Kenya maintains a long-standing commitment to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe in cooperation and dialogue and, hence, have endeavoured to make a positive contribution to global peace and disarmament processes through various multilateral forums, including this Conference, in order to help create a safer world. Our commitment to multilateralism is underpinned by a belief that common aspirations and goals cannot be achieved by a hardening of positions, narrowness of options and insistence on one's viewpoint, but rather by exercising flexibility and willingness to compromise. It is in that context that my delegation wishes to address itself to various concerns on the nuclear disarmament agenda.

It is a sad fact that the Conference has been unable to make any progress on undertaking its core responsibility — that of substantive negotiations leading to the development of treaties — for over two decades. This stark reality is what led the international community to focus its frustration on the lack of forward movement in the Conference towards the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward nuclear disarmament negotiations in 2016. This resulted ultimately in the adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/258, mandating a conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, which will commence its work at the United Nations in New York on 27 March 2017. Kenya was an active participant in the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group in Geneva last year and intends to engage in the forthcoming negotiations in New York with similar purposefulness towards the outcome, as we believe that the threat and consequences of a nuclear-weapon detonation, whether intentional or mistaken, are too dire to be left to only one option or one body to address. We see the work of the New York conference, therefore, as complementary to that of the Conference and not in competition, as the ultimate objective remains the same.

With the foregoing in mind, we reaffirm that all the peoples of the world have a vital interest in the success of disarmament negotiations and that all States have a duty to contribute to efforts in the field of disarmament as well as the right to participate in disarmament negotiations. In that regard, we are convinced that discussions within the forum of a revitalized Conference on Disarmament should not only effectively incorporate the views of all States, through opening up full membership of the Conference to all United Nations Member States, but they would also be enriched through the alternative positions,

inputs and fresh insights that new members could bring on board as we pursue our shared objective of diminishing and ultimately ending the threat of nuclear weapons. We therefore advocate that the membership of this body is reviewed as soon as possible in order to facilitate its enlargement to a universal one.

We acknowledge the importance of the Conference in considering the development of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work while ensuring undiminished security for all States, pursuant to the agenda adopted by the first special session on disarmament in 1978 and, in particular, taking into account the four core issues of nuclear disarmament, a ban on the production of fissile material, negative security assurances and prevention of an arms race in outer space in line with various General Assembly resolutions. Indeed, for my delegation, comprehensive nuclear disarmament continues to be a priority. However, it is a fact that new developments in science and advances in technology have brought with them new and increased threats to international security. It would be remiss of the Conference to be caught in a time warp and fail to consider and engage itself in developing norms and strategies to tackle those threats, particularly if there is no other international intergovernmental body actively and directly engaged in tackling that threat.

In that regard, Mr. President, I wish to commend the delegation of the Russian Federation for the work and the lengths to which they have gone in presenting a draft programme of work for the 2017 session and the consultations, both formal and informal, which you have undertaken with a view to achieving consensus on it. Having reviewed the proposal, my delegation had a number of observations on the same, but in the light of the President's decision not to table the proposal due to lack of consensus, I will spare the meeting the details of our views on the proposal. Nevertheless, my delegation remains committed to seeing the work of the Conference move forward in the interest of global safety and security and, further, in the interest of getting the Conference back to substantive work.

The President *(spoke in Russian)*: I thank the representative of Kenya for his statement, his words of support and his words of appreciation for the Russian presidency.

Is there anyone else wishing to speak? I see no one. If there is no one wishing to take the floor, please allow me now to share some thoughts on the four weeks of the Russian presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, with today's meeting, Russia concludes its presidency of the Conference. During these four weeks, we successfully hosted the main political event of the year at the Conference: an extremely impressive high-level segment. There were two dozen high-level guest speakers. On the whole, the segment went well and there was a positive atmosphere in the search for solutions to the long-standing issues of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, arms control and disarmament, with the emphasis on relaunching the work of the Conference.

One other important event also took place. On the occasion of the 110th anniversary of the Second Hague Peace Conference, a special thematic meeting of the Conference on Disarmament was held and the participants were addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergei Lavrov. The meeting, which was attended by representatives of States, international organizations, academia and civil society, attracted a great deal of interest and was reported on in the media.

However, the Russian presidency has focused most of its efforts on resolving the most important problem facing the Conference: agreeing on a programme of work. We deployed all available options and formats, such as weekly plenary meetings, a meeting of the six Presidents for the 2017 session and coordinators of the regional groups. We held three rounds of informal consultations in plenary and also separate targeted discussions with the Western Group and the Group of 21. There were numerous bilateral consultations, including contacts with the Chair of the working group on the way ahead.

In our work in the presidency, we did our best to learn the lessons of the past, which, effectively, gave us no choice: that is, instead of embarking on the vicious circle of traditional agendas, which had been unsuccessful for 21 years, we decided to try to

introduce a new topical issue that would address the security interests of every single member of the Conference.

We looked at the growing threat of terrorism with weapons of mass destruction. After all, the use by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other terrorist groups of toxic materials or other chemical warfare agents as weapons has become a tragic reality of our times. Moreover, the mechanisms that were intended to prevent access by non-State actors to chemical weapons have unfortunately not worked. What is more, terrorists have actually stepped up their production.

That is why, as you know, we put forward a proposal to the Conference last year on drafting a convention on the suppression of acts of chemical terrorism. Later, on the advice of interested delegations, we added biological terrorism to its scope. We submitted to the Conference a draft of elements of a convention on the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism, together with an explanatory note and other relevant materials. Substantial improvements were made to our initiative, which gained a lot of supporters.

Of course, in the course of our presidency, and before it started, we heard a lot of doubts, and even objections, about the proposed draft convention. Some people talked about the risk that the draft convention would duplicate the Biological Weapons Convention, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and other instruments of international law. Others even seemed to suggest that the draft convention would undermine these international law instruments.

In our opinion, these fears are far-fetched. The only way to get rid of them is for everyone to work together to go through the text of the draft convention in a focused manner, article by article, comparing it with other documents and putting in such corrections as Conference members may consider necessary.

In fact, that is precisely the approach we set out in the draft programme of work of the Conference. We offered to start on drafting the basic elements of the new convention. However, some delegations turned out to be unwilling to contemplate even this very moderate approach. Not only that, but, judging by their statements, some even started to predict, for some reason, that negotiations over the draft convention would drag on for years. It is not clear what such pessimistic predictions are based on. After all, the draft convention would not be a comprehensive agreement like the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty or the Chemical Weapons Convention, but a short and fairly specific document. As we see it, just a few weeks of intensive work by the Conference would be enough to draw up a substantial text.

I should also like to recall that the Russian delegation provided exhaustive replies, orally and in writing, to all the serious questions that were asked about the proposed convention and proved that the doubts and objections did not hold water. Everyone saw and heard the arguments. But it seems that not everyone wanted to agree with them. It is truly a great pity.

Distinguished colleagues, as President of the Conference on Disarmament, we did everything within our power to garner a consensus on the programme of work of the Conference. Where we could, we took into account the ideas and concerns of all colleagues. In our view, the draft programme of work set out in document CD/WP.600 provides an excellent basis for compromise. The document remains on the table and we would like to hope that subsequent Presidents will be able to use it in their work. For our part, we stand ready to offer them the fullest cooperation, so that 2017 does not become yet another year of lost opportunities for the Conference.

In conclusion, I should like to thank particularly those delegations — and they are the majority — who were ready to accept the draft programme of work prepared by the Russian presidency. We are grateful for the cooperation of the Chair of the working group on the way ahead, Ambassador Htin Lynn, the other colleagues who presided over the Conference on Disarmament this year, the coordinators of the regional groups and all delegations, and also the secretariat and the interpreters for their assistance with our work. We are very grateful to them all.

I see the representative of Myanmar wishes to take the floor. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Lynn (Myanmar): First and foremost, Mr. President, I commend the dedication and efforts that you and your delegation have put into reviving the Conference on Disarmament and to bringing it back to where it belongs, as entrusted by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Document CD/WP.600, in my view, has been a useful litmus test in our quest for identifying common ground for a programme of work with a negotiating mandate. For my part, I will continue to try to fulfil my mandate as entrusted by document CD/2090 of 17 February. So far, I have met with 26 delegations out of 65. I will continue to conduct bilateral and multilateral consultations and with all groups of the Conference in future and, of course, as soon as possible. I thank all delegations who have made themselves available for such consultations. After a good round of consultations, I will be closely interacting with the presidency and the other five Presidents of the session with a view to finding a possible future line of action. So far, I can only promise you that my delegation and I will spare no efforts to fulfil my mandate as you have entrusted to me.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of Myanmar for his statement and his kind words addressed to the Russian presidency.

Is there anyone else who wishes to speak? If not, we will conclude our work for today. The next plenary meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 21 March, under the presidency of the Ambassador of Senegal.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.